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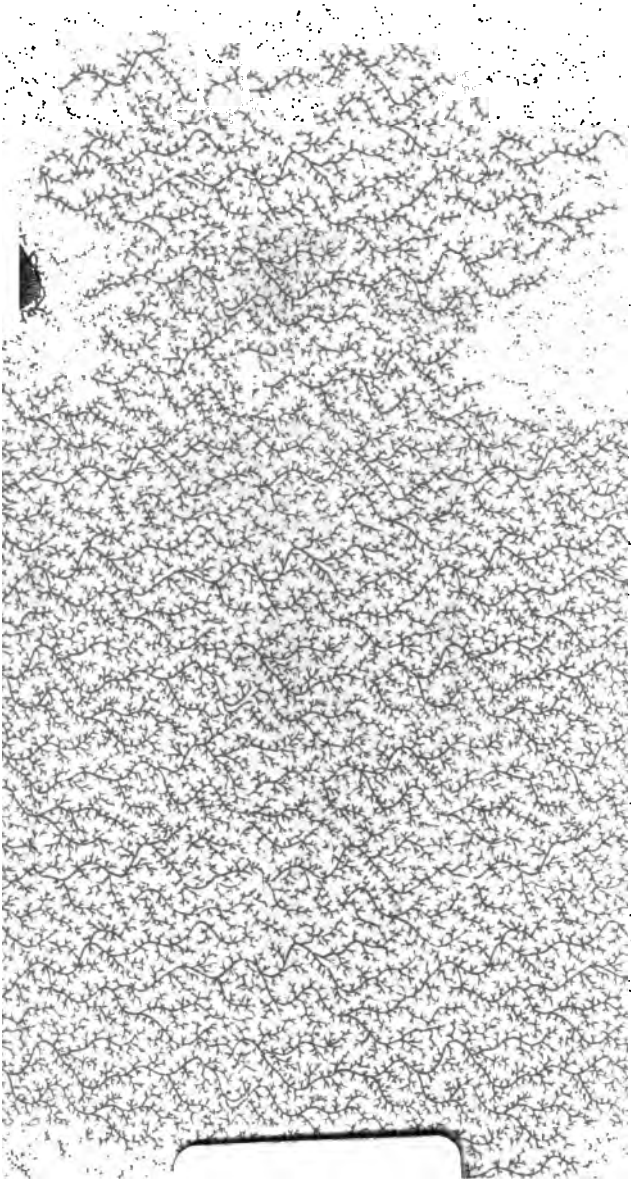

MILTON'S

CONSIDERATIONS

TOUCHING THE LIKELIEST MEANS

O REMOVE HIRELINGS OUT OF THE CHURCH.

WITH A

REFACE ON THE PROSE WRITINGS OF MILTON.

•

HEB. vii. 12.

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a hange also of the law."

ABERDEEN:

A. MURDOCH, 46, DEE STREET;

EDINBURGH, W. INNES, HANOVER STREET, AND M. PATERSON, UNION PLACE;

GLASGOW: G. GALLIE, BUCHANNAN STREET, AND JOHN SYMINGTON & Co. QUEEN STREET.

1839.

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PREFACE TO THIS EDITION.

JOHN MILTON, undoubtedly one of the very greatest literary ornaments of his country, has owed his celebrity among us hitherto chiefly to his poetry. As a poet, he has merited more than his fame, high as it is. His "Comus" is the most perfectly beautiful of dramatic poems; and his "Paradise Lost," to say nothing of the extent to which it has contributed to human improvement, by the religious and moral sentiments which it contains, is confessedly the prince of epics. But the prose works of Milton have as yet been very inadequately appreciated: they have been wonderfully little known. How many are there even among what may be called the reading part of the community, who never heard, till very recently at least, of Milton as a prose author at all? There are passages in the prose writings of John Milton which want only the form of verse in order to their equalling, if not surpassing, as poetry, the most admired effusions of his genius in the "Paradise Lost." But this is their smallest praise: they have merit of a different and, we will venture to add, of a higher order. They are instinct with the noblest spirit, and the most uncompromising principles of civil and religious liberty. Milton may be said to be the philosopher of freedom, as Bacon is of physical and mental science. He goes to the core of the subject. He consults only with reason and, especially with reference to religious liberty, the Word of God. His writings (sure token of truth and greatness) are, after the lapse of nearly two hundred years, useful, applicable, and full of light to the existing generation of mankind. The world is yet only endeavouring to near his standard with slow, and timorous, and feeble steps.

In reading the prose works of Milton, one very naturally asks, how is it that principles so obviously just and scriptural should have been written and printed for so long a time, and yet have been so much of a dead letter—have lain dormant within the boards of folios and octavos, which have been read only by the learned and privileged few? Surely truth must find on earth a very unfavourable soil! Surely the world must be dull of hearing—woefully slow to understand! This is a remarkable fact, certainly, but not by any means an unaccountable one. The truths of political science, whether civil or ecclesiastical, have to fight their way forward in the world against a host of strong and violently-opposing interests. "Demetrius and the craftsmen that are with him," are ever ready to drown with their furious clamour, while they remember their silver shrines, the still small voice of reason and the oracles of God. Moreover, the learned and the privileged

DUP. EXCH. 7 JUNE 1900

few have been exceedingly jealous of the writings of Milton; they have seen in them too much of what he would himself have called "a venturous edge," to trust them freely among the people; their general circulation would have made them tremble for the safety of those trees from which they have gathered so long their goodly fruit, and they have therefore made them much more welcome to fill a place in dusty and time-honoured shelves, than to take the air, and roam unconfined abroad. Another reason, no doubt, why these writings have been so little known and influential in proportion to their intrinsic merits is, that they have hitherto been published in a form by much too inaccessible to persons of ordinary means and leisure. They are well adapted for the most part, by their style and brevity, as well as by their sentiments, to the popular mind; and, had they been circulated in a more popular form, no doubt they would have been responded to more generally, more powerfully, and with better effect.

The treatise which is now offered to the public in this cheap form, with the view of supplying the desideratum which has been just referred to, was presented by Milton to the Parliament which sat in England after the termination of the Protectorate, and before the restoration of Charles II. It was designed as a companion to another, *on liberty of conscience*, which may afterwards, if the present publisher receive sufficient encouragement, be issued in a similar form. Both were first printed in 1659. The republication of the following treatise appears in the mean while to be peculiarly seasonable. Without subscribing to every minute opinion which it contains, we venture to say that it is the text-book of all that has been recently advanced on the important subject of the maintenance of a gospel ministry. The supplying of the more thinly peopled districts of a country, is a point which is presently attracting no small attention. Let what is said with reference to this at page 20—24 be well considered. The spiritual independence of the church is also at present a very exciting topic. How almost prophetically has the author of the following treatise expressed himself on this point:—"*Which two things, independence and state hire in religion can never subsist long or certainly together.* * * * *They* (state clergymen) *last of all prove common incendiaries, and exalt their horns against the magistrate himself that maintains them, as the priest of Rome did soon after against his benefactor the emperor, and the presbyters of late in Scotland!*"

Aberdeen, 2d April, 1839.

TO THE PARLIAMENT

OF THE

COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND,

WITH THE DOMINIONS THEREOF.

Owing to your protection, Supreme Senate! this liberty of writing, which I have used these eighteen years on all occasions to assert the best rights and freedoms both of church and state, and so far approved, as to have been trusted with the representment and defence of your actions to all christendom against an adversary of no mean repute; to whom should I address what I still publish on the same argument, but to you, whose magnanimous councils first opened and unbound the age from a double bondage under prelatical and regal tyranny; above our own hopes heartening us to look up at last like men and Christians from the slavish dejection, wherein from father to son we were bred up and taught; and thereby deserving of these nations, if they be not barbarously ingrateful, to be acknowledged, next under God, the authors and best patrons of religious and civil liberty, that ever these islands brought forth? The care and tuition of whose peace and safety, after a short but scandalous night of interruption, is now again, by a new dawning of God's miraculous providence among us, revolved upon your shoulders. And to whom more appertain these considerations, which I propound, than to yourselves, and the debate before you, though I trust of no difficulty, yet at present of great expectation, not whether ye will gratify, were it no more than so, but whether ye will hearken to the just petition of many thousands best affected both to religion and to this your return, or whether ye will satisfy, which you never can, the covetous pretences and demands of insatiable hirelings, whose disaffection ye well know, both to yourselves and your resolutions? That I, though among many others in this common concernment, interpose to your deliberations what my thoughts also are; your own judgment and the success thereof hath given me the confidence; which requests but this, that if I have prosperously, God so favouring me, defended the public cause of this commonwealth to foreigners, ye would not think the reason and ability, whereon ye trusted once (and repent not) your whole reputation to the world, either grown less by more maturity and longer study, or less available

in English than in another tongue: but that if it sufficed some years past to convince and satisfy the unengaged of other nations in the justice of your doings, though then held paradoxal, it may as well suffice now against weaker opposition in matters, except here in England with a spirituality of men devoted to their temporal gain, of no controversy else among protestants. Neither do I doubt, seeing daily the acceptance which they find who in their petitions venture to bring advice also, and new models of a commonwealth, but that you will interpret it much more the duty of a Christian to offer what his conscience persuades him may be of moment to the freedom and better constituting of the church: since it is a deed of highest charity to help undeceive the people, and a work worthiest your authority, in all things else authors, asserters, and now recoverers of our liberty, to deliver us, the only people of all protestants left still undelivered, from the oppressions of a simonious decimating clergy, who shame not, against the judgment and practice of all other churches reformed, to maintain, though very weakly, their popish and oft-refuted positions; not in a point of conscience wherein they might be blameless, but in a point of covetousness and unjust claim to other men's goods; a contention foul and odious in any man, but most of all in ministers of the gospel, in whom contention, though for their own right, scarce is allowable. Till which grievances be removed, and religion set free from the monopoly of hirelings, I dare affirm, that no model whatsoever of a commonwealth will prove successful or undisturbed; and so persuaded, implore divine assistance on your pious counsels and proceedings to unanimity in this and all other truth.

JOHN MILTON.

CONSIDERATIONS

TOUCHING THE LIKELIEST MEANS

TO REMOVE HIRELINGS OUT OF THE CHURCH.

THE former treatise, which leads in this, began with two things ever found working much mischief to the one side restraining, and hire on the other side corrupting, the teachers thereof. The latter of these is by much the more dangerous; for under force, though no thank to the forcers, true religion ofttimes best thrives and flourishes; but the corruption of teachers, most commonly the effect of hire, is the very bane of truth in them who are so corrupted. Of force not to be used in matters of religion, I have already spoken; and so stated matters of conscience and religion in faith and divine worship, and so severed them from blasphemy and heresy, the one being such properly as is despiteful, the other such as stands not to the rule of Scripture, and so both of them not matters of religion, but rather against it, that to them who will yet use force, this only choice can be left, whether they will force them to believe, to whom it is not given from above, being not forced thereto by any principle of the gospel, which is now the only dispensation of God to all men; or whether, being protestants, they will punish in those things wherein the protestant religion denies them to be judges, either in themselves infallible, or to the consciences of other men; or whether, lastly, they think fit to punish errour, supposing they can be infallible that it is so, being not wilful, but conscientious, and, according to the best light of him who errs, grounded on Scripture: which kind of errour all men religious, or but only reasonable, have thought worthier of pardon, and the growth thereof to be prevented by spiritual means and church-discipline, not by civil laws and outward force, since it is God only who gives as well to believe aright as to believe at all; and by those means, which he ordained sufficiently in his church to the full execution of his divine purpose in the gospel. It remains now to speak of hire, the other evil so mischievous in religion: whereof I promised then to speak further, when I should find God disposing me, and opportunity inviting. Opportunity I find now inviting; and apprehend therein

the concurrence of God disposing; since the maintenance of church-ministers, a thing not properly belonging to the magistrate, and yet with such importunity called for, and expected from him, is at present under public debate. Wherein, lest any thing may happen to be determined and established prejudicial to the right and freedom of the church, or advantageous to such as may be found hirelings therein, it will be now most seasonable, and in these matters, wherein every Christian hath his free suffrage, no way misbecoming christian meakness to offer freely, without disparagement to the wisest, such advice as God shall incline him and enable him to propound: since heretofore in commonwealths of most fame for government, civil laws were not established till they had been first for certain days published to the view of all men, that whoso pleased might speak freely his opinion thereof, and give in his exceptions, ere the law could pass to a full establishment. And where ought this equity to have more place, than in the liberty which is inseparable from christian religion? This, I am not ignorant, will be a work unpleasing to some: but what truth is not hateful to some or other, as this, in likelihood, will be to none but hirelings. And if there be among them who hold it their duty to speak impartial truth, as the work of their ministry, though not performed without money, let them not envy others who think the same no less their duty by the general office of Christianity, to speak truth, as in all reason may be thought, more impartially and unsuspectedly without money.

Hire of itself is neither a thing unlawful, nor a word of any evil note, signifying no more than a due recompense or reward; as when our Saviour saith, "the labourer is worthy of his hire." That which makes it so dangerous in the church, and properly makes the hireling—a word always of evil signification—is either the excess thereof, or the undue manner of giving and taking it. What harm the excess thereof brought to the church, perhaps was not found by experience till the days of Constantine; who out of his zeal thinking he could be never too liberally a nursing father of the church, might be not unfitly said to have either overlaid it or choked it in the nursing. Which was foretold, as is recorded in ecclesiastical traditions, by a voice heard from heaven, on the very day that those great donations and church-revenues were given, crying aloud, "This day is poison poured into the church." Which the event soon after verified, as appears by another no less ancient observation, "That religion brought forth wealth, and the daughter devoured the mother." But long ere wealth came into the church, so soon as any gain appeared in religion, hirelings were apparent; drawn in long before by the very scent thereof.

Judas therefore, the first hireling, for want of present hire answerable to his coveting, from the small number or the meanness of such as then were the religious, sold the religion itself with the founder thereof, his master. Simon Magus the next, in hope only that preaching and the gifts of the Holy Ghost would prove gainful, offered beforehand a sum of money to obtain them. Not long after, as the apostle foretold, hirelings like wolves came in by herds: Acts xx. 29, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Tit. i. 11, "Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." 2 Pet. ii. 3, "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Yet they taught not false doctrine only, but seeming piety: 1 Tim. vi. 5, "Supposing that gain is godliness." Neither came they in of themselves only, but invited ofttimes by a corrupt audience: 2 Tim. iv. 3, "For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" and they on the other side as fast heaping to themselves disciples, Acts xx. 30, doubtless had as itching palms: 2 Pet. ii. 15, "Following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Jude 11, "They ran greedily after the errour of Balaam for reward." Thus we see, that not only the excess of hire in wealthiest times, but also the undue and vicious taking or giving it, though but small or mean, as in the primitive times, gave to hirelings occasion, though not intended, yet sufficient to creep at first into the church. Which argues also the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, to remove them quite, unless every minister were, as St. Paul, contented to preach gratis; but few such are to be found. As therefore we cannot justly take away all hire in the church, because we cannot otherwise quite remove all hirelings, so are we not, for the impossibility of removing them all, to use therefore no endeavour that fewest may come in; but rather, in regard the evil, do what we can, will always be incumbent and unavoidable, to use our utmost diligence how it may be least dangerous: which will be likeliest effected, if we consider, first, what recompence God hath ordained should be given to ministers of the church; (for that a recompence ought to be given them, and may by them justly be received, our Saviour himself from the very light of reason and of equity hath declared, Luke x. 7, "The labourer is worthy of his hire;") next, by whom; and lastly, in what manner.

What recompence ought to be given to church ministers, God hath answerably ordained according to that difference, which he

hath manifestly put between those his two great dispensations, the law and the gospel. Under the law he gave them tithes; under the gospel, having left all things in his church to charity and christian freedom, he hath given them only what is justly given them. That, as well under the gospel as under the law, say our English divines, and they only of all protestants, is tithes; and they say true, if any man be so minded to give them of his own the tenth or twentieth; but that the law therefore of tithes is in force under the gospel, all other protestant divines, though equally concerned, yet constantly deny. For although hire to the labourer be of moral and perpetual right, yet that special kind of hire, the tenth, can be of no right or necessity, but to that special labour for which God ordained it. That special labour was the levitical and ceremonial service of the tabernacle, Numb. xviii. 21, 31, which is now abolished: the right therefore of that special hire must needs be withal abolished, as being also ceremonial. That tithes were ceremonial, is plain, not being given to the Levites till they had been first offered a heave-offering to the Lord, ver. 24, 28. He then who by that law brings tithes into the gospel, of necessity brings in withal a sacrifice, and an altar; without which tithes by that law were unsanctified and polluted, ver. 32, and therefore never thought on in the first christian times, till ceremonies, altars, and oblations, by an ancienter corruption, were brought back long before. And yet the Jews, ever since their temple was destroyed, though they have rabbies and teachers of their law, yet pay no tithes, as having no Levites to whom, no temple where, to pay them, no altar whereon to hallow them: which argues that the Jews themselves never thought tithes moral, but ceremonial only. That Christians therefore should take them up when Jews have laid them down, must needs be very absurd and preposterous. Next, it is as clear in the same chapter, that the priests and Levites had not tithes for their labour only in the tabernacle, but in regard they were to have no other part nor inheritance in the land, ver. 20, 24, and by that means for a tenth lost a twelfth. But our Levites undergoing no such law of deprivement, can have no right to any such compensation: nay, if by this law they will have tithes, can have no inheritance of land, but forfeit what they have. Besides this, tithes were of two sorts, those of every year, and those of every third year: of the former, every one that brought his tithes, was to eat his share: Deut. xiv. 23, "Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil," &c. Nay, though he could not bring his tithe in kind, by reason of his distant dwelling from the tabernacle or temple,

but was thereby forced to turn it into money, he was to bestow that money on whatsoever pleased him, oxen, sheep, wine, or strong drink; and to eat and drink thereof there before the Lord, both he and his household, ver. 24, 25, 26. As for tithes of every third year, they were not given only to the Levite, but to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, ver. 28, 29, and chap. xxvi. 12, 13. So that ours, if they will have tithes, must admit of these sharers with them. Nay, these tithes were not paid in at all to the Levite, but the Levite himself was to come with those his fellow-guests, and eat his share of them only at his house who provided them; and this not in regard of his ministerial office, but because he had no part or inheritance in the land. Lastly, the priests and Levites, a tribe, were of a far different constitution from this of our ministers under the gospel: in them were orders and degrees both by family, dignity, and office, mainly distinguished; the high priest, his brethren and his sons, to whom the Levites themselves paid tithes, and of the best, were eminently superiour, Numb. xviii. 28, 29. No protestant, I suppose, will liken one of our ministers to a high priest, but rather to a common Levite. Unless then, to keep their tithes, they mean to bring back again bishops, archbishops, and the whole gang of prelatry, to whom will they themselves pay tithes, as by that law it was a sin to them if they did not? ver. 32. Certainly this must needs put them to a deep demur, while the desire of holding fast their tithes without sin may tempt them to bring back again bishops, as the likeness of that hierarchy that should receive tithes from them; and the desire to pay none, may advise them to keep out of the church all orders above them. But if we have to do at present, as I suppose we have, with true reformed protestants, not with papists or prelates, it will not be denied that in the gospel there be but two ministerial degrees, presbyters and deacons: which if they contend to have any succession, reference or conformity with those two degrees under the law, priests and Levites, it must needs be such whereby our presbyters or ministers may be answerable to priests, and our deacons to Levites; by which rule of proportion it will follow that we must pay our tithes to the deacons only, and they only to the ministers. But if it be truer yet, that the priesthood of Aaron typified a better reality, 1 Pet. ii. 5, signifying the christian true and "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice;" it follows hence, that we are now justly exempt from paying tithes to any who claim from Aaron, since that priesthood is in us now real, which in him was but a shadow. Seeing then by all this which has been shewn, that the law of tithes is partly ceremonial, as the work was for

which they were given, party judicial, not of common, but of particular right to the tribe of Levi, nor to them alone, but to the owner also and his houshold, at the time of their offering, and every three years to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, their appointed sharers, and that they were a tribe of priests and deacons improperly compared to the constitution of our ministry; and the tithes given by that people to those deacons only; it follows that our ministers at this day, being neither priests nor Levites, nor fitly answering to either of them, can have no just title or pretence to tithes, by any consequence drawn from the law of Moses. But they think they have yet a better plea in the example of Melchisedec, who took tithes of Abraham ere the law was given; whence they would infer tithes to be of moral right. but they ought to know, or to remember, that not examples, but express commands, oblige our obedience to God or man: next, that whatsoever was done in religion before the law written, is not presently to be counted moral, when as so many things were then done both ceremonial and judaically judicial, that we need not doubt to conclude all times before Christ more or less under the ceremonial law. To what end served else those altars and sacrifices, that distinction of clean and unclean entering into the ark, circumcision, and the raising up of seed to the elder brother? Gen. xxxviii. 8. If these things be not moral, though before the law, how are tithes, though in the example of Abraham and Melchisedec? But this instance is so far from being the just ground of a law, that after all circumstances duly weighed both from Gen. xiv. and Heb. vii. it will not be allowed them so much as an example. Melchisedec, besides his priestly benediction, brought with him bread and wine sufficient to refresh Abraham and his whole army; incited to do so, first, by the secret providence of God, intending him for a type of Christ and his priesthood; next, by his due thankfulness and honour to Abraham, who had freed his borders of Salem from a potent enemy: Abraham on the other side honours him with a tenth of all, that is to say, (for he took not sure his whole estate with him to that war,) of the spoils, Heb. vii. 4. Incited he also by the same secret providence, to signify as grandfather of Levi, that the Levitical priesthood was excelled by the priesthood of Christ. For the giving of a tenth declared, it seems, in those countries and times, him the greater who received it. That which next incited him, was partly his gratitude to requite the present, partly his reverence to the person and his benediction; to his person, as a king and priest, greater therefore than Abraham, who was a priest also but not a king. And who unhired will be so hardy as to say,

that Abraham at any other time ever paid him tithes, either before or after; or had then, but for this accidental meeting and obligement; or that else Melchisedec had demanded or exacted them, or took them otherwise than as the voluntary gift of Abraham? But our ministers, though neither priests nor kings more than any other Christian, greater in their own esteem than Abraham and all his seed, for the verbal labour of a seventh day's preachment, not bringing, like Melchisedec, bread or wine at their own cost, would not take only at the willing hand of liberality or gratitude, but require and exact as due, the tenth—not of spoils, but of our whole estates and labours; nor once, but yearly. We then, it seems, by the example of Abraham, must pay tithes to these Melchisedecs: but what if the person of Abraham can neither no way represent us, or will oblige the ministers to pay tithes no less than other men? Abraham had not only a priest in his loins, but was himself a priest, and gave tithes to Melchisedec either as grandfather of Levi, or as father of the faithful. If as grandfather (though he understood it not) of Levi, he obliged not us, but Levi only, the inferiour priest, by that homage (as the apostle to the Hebrews clearly enough explains) to acknowledge the greater. And they who by Melchisedec claim from Abraham as Levi's grandfather, have none to seek their tithes of but the Levites, where they can find them. If Abraham, as father of the faithful, paid tithes to Melchisedec, then certainly the ministers also, if they be of that number, paid in him equally with the rest. Which may induce us to believe, that as both Abraham and Melchisedec, so tithes also in that action typical and ceremonial, signified nothing else but that subjection which all the faithful, both ministers and people, owe to Christ, our high priest and king.

In any literal sense, from this example, they never will be able to extort that the people in those days paid tithes to priests, but this only, that one priest once in his life, of spoils only, and in requital partly of a liberal present, partly of a benediction, gave voluntary tithes, not to a greater priest than himself, as far as Abraham could then understand, but rather to a priest and king joined in one person. They will reply, perhaps, that if one priest paid tithes to another, it must needs be understood that the people did no less to the priest. But I shall easily remove that necessity, by remembering them that in those days was no priest, but the father, or the first-born of each family; and by consequence no people to pay him tithes, but his own children and servants, who had not wherewithal to pay him, but of his own. Yet grant that the people then paid tithes, there will not yet be the like reason to enjoin us; they being then under ceremonies, a mere laity, we

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though then chief teachers of the people, such at least as were not Levites, did not take tithes, but paid them: so much less covetous were the scribes and Pharisees, in those worse times than ours at this day. This is so apparent to the reformed divines of other countries, that when any one of ours hath attempted in Latin to maintain this argument of tithes, though a man would think they might suffer him without opposition, in a point equally tending to the advantage of all ministers, yet they forbear not to oppose him, as in a doctrine not fit to pass unopposed under the gospel. Which shews the modesty, the contentedness of those foreign pastors, with the maintenance given them, their sincerity also in the truth, though less gainful, and the avarice of ours; who through the love of their old papistical tithes, consider not the weak arguments, or rather conjectures and surmises, which they bring to defend them. On the other side, although it be sufficient to have proved in general the abolishing of tithes, as part of the judaical or ceremonial law, which is abolished all, as well that before as that after Moses; yet I shall further prove them abrogated by an express ordinance of the gospel, founded not on any type, or that municipal law of Moses, but on moral and general equity, given us instead: 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14, "Know ye not, that they who minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? So also the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." He saith not, should live on things which were of the temple, or of the altar, of which were tithes, for that had given them a clear title: but abrogating that former law of Moses, which determined what and how much, by a later ordinance of Christ, which leaves the what and how much indefinite and free, so it be sufficient to live on: he saith, "The Lord hath so ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel;" which hath neither temple, altar, nor sacrifice: Heb. vii. 13, "For he of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar:" his ministers therefore cannot thence have tithes. And where the Lord hath so ordained, we may find easily in more than one evangelist: Luke x. 7, 8, "In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire, &c. And into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you." To which ordinance of Christ it may seem likeliest, that the apostle refers us both here, and 1 Tim. v. 18, where he cites this as the saying of our Saviour, "That the labourer is worthy of his hire." And both by this place of Luke, and that of Matt. x. 9, 10, 11, it evidently appears, that our Saviour ordained no cer-

tain maintenance for his apostles or ministers, publicly or privately, in house or city received; but that, whatever it were, which might suffice to live on: and this not commanded or proportioned by Abraham or by Moses, whom he might easily have here cited, as his manner was, but declared only by a rule of common equity, which proportions the hire as well to the ability of him who gives, as to the labour of him who receives, and recommends him only as worthy, not invests him with a legal right. And mark whereon he grounds his this ordinance; not on a perpetual right of tithes from Melchisedec, as hirelings pretend, which he never claimed, either for himself, or for his ministers, but on the plain and common equity of rewarding the labourer; worthy sometimes of single, sometimes of double honour, not proportionable by tithes. And the apostle in this forecited chapter to the Corinthians, ver. 11, affirms it to be no great recompence, if carnal things be reaped for spiritual sown; but to mention tithes, neglects here the fittest occasion that could be offered him, and leaves the rest free and undetermined. Certainly if Christ or his apostles had approved of tithes, they would have, either by writing or tradition, recommended them to the church; and that soon would have appeared in the practice of those primitive and the next ages. But for the first three hundred years and more, in all the ecclesiastical story, I find no such doctrine or example: though errour by that time had brought back again priests, altars, and oblations; and in many other points of religion had miserably judaized the church. So that the defenders of tithes, after a long pomp, and tedious preparation out of heathen authors, telling us that tithes were paid to Hercules and Apollo, which perhaps was imitated from the Jews, and as it were bespeaking our expectation, that they will abound much more with authorities out of christian story, have nothing of general approbation to begin with from the first three or four ages, but that which abundantly serves to the confutation of their tithes; while they confess that churchmen in those ages lived merely upon freewill-offerings. Neither can they say, that tithes were not then paid for want of a civil magistrate to ordain them, for Christians had then also lands, and might give out of them what they pleased; and yet of tithes then given we find no mention. And the first christian emperors, who did all things as bishops advised them, supplied what was wanting to the clergy not out of tithes, which were never motioned, but out of their own imperial revenues; as is manifest in Eusebius, Theodoret, and Sozomen, from Constantine to Arcadius. Hence those ancientest reformed churches of the Waldenses, if they rather continued not pure since the apostles, denied that tithes were to be

given, or that they were ever given in the primitive church, as appears by an ancient tractate in the Bohemian history. Thus far hath the church been always, whether in her prime or in her ancientest reformation, from the approving of tithes: nor without reason; for they might easily perceive that tithes were fitted to the Jews only, a national church of many incomplete synagogues, uniting the accomplishment of divine worship in one temple; and the Levites there had their tithes paid where they did their bodily work; to which a particular tribe was set apart by divine appointment, not by the people's election: but the christian church is universal; not tied to nation, diocess, or parish, but consisting of many particular churches complete in themselves, gathered not by compulsion, or the accident of dwelling nigh together, but by free consent, choosing both their particular church and their church-officers. Whereas, if tithes be set up, all these christian priviliges will be disturbed and soon lost, and with them christian liberty.

The first authority which our adversaries bring, after those fabulous apostolic canons, which they dare not insist upon, is a provincial council held at Cullen, where they voted tithes to be God's rent, in the year 356; at the same time perhaps when the three kings reigned there, and of like authority. For to what purpose do they bring these trivial testimonies, by which they might as well prove altars, candles at noon, and the greatest part of those superstitions fetched from paganism or Jewism, which the papist, inveigled by this fond argument of antiquity, retains to this day? To what purpose those decrees of I know not what bishops, to a parliament and people who have thrown out both bishops and altars, and promised all reformation by the word of God? And that altars brought tithes hither, as one corruption begot another, is evident by one of those questions, which the monk Austin propounded to the pope, "concerning those things, which by offerings of the faithful came to the altar;" as Beda writes, 1, i. c. 27. If then by these testimonies we must have tithes continued, we must again have altars. Of Fathers, by custom so called, they quote Ambrose, Augustin, and some other ceremonial doctors of the same leaven: whose assertion, without pertinent scripture, no reformed church can admit; and what they vouch is founded on the law of Moses, with which every where pitifully mistaken, they again incorporate the gospel; as did the rest also of those titular Fathers, perhaps an age or two before them, by many rites and ceremonies, both Jewish and heathenish, introduced; whereby, thinking to gain all, they lost all; and instead of winning Jews and pagans to be Christians, by too much

condescending they turned Christians into Jews and pagans. To heap such unconvincing citations as these in religion, whereof the Scripture only is our rule, argues not much learning nor judgment, but the lost labour of much unprofitable reading. And yet a late hot Querist* for tithes, whom ye may know by his wits lying ever beside him in the margin, to be ever beside his wits in the text, a fierce reformer once, now rankled with a contrary heat, would send us back, very reformedly indeed, to learn reformation from Tyndarus and Rebuffus, two canonical promoters. They produce next the ancient constitutions of this land, Saxon laws, edicts of kings, and their councils, from Athelstan, in the year 928, that tithes by statute were paid: and might produce from Ina, above two hundred years before, that Romescot or Peter's penny was by as good statute law paid to the pope; from 725, and almost as long continued. And who knows not that this law of tithes was enacted by those kings and barons upon the opinion they had of their divine right? as the very words import of Edward the Confessor, in the close of that law: "For so blessed Austin preached and taught;" meaning the monk, who first brought the Romish religion into England from Gregory the pope. And by the way I add, that by these laws, imitating the law of Moses, the third part of tithes only was the priest's due; the other two were appointed for the poor, and to adorn or repair churches, as the canons of Ecbert and Elfric witness: Concil. Brit. If then these laws were founded upon the opinion of divine authority, and that authority be found mistaken and erroneous, as hath been fully manifested, it follows, that these laws fall of themselves with their false foundation. But with what face or conscience can they allege Moses or these laws for titles, as they now enjoy or exact them; whereof Moses ordains the owner, as we heard before, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, partakers of the Levite; and these Fathers which they cite, and these though Romish rather than English laws, allotted both to priest and bishop the third part only? But these our protestant, these our new reformed English presbyterian divines, against their own cited authors, and to the shame of their pretended reformation, would engross to themselves all tithes by statute; and supported more by their wilful obstinacy and desire of filthy lucre, than by these both insufficient and impertinent authorities, would persuade a christian magistracy and parliament, whom we trust God hath restored for a happier reformation, to impose upon us a judaical ceremonial law, and yet from that law to be more irregular and unwarrantable, more com-

* Prynne.

plying with a covetous clergy, than any of those popish kings and parliaments alleged. Another shift they have to plead, that tithes may be moral as well as the sabbath, a tenth of fruits as well as a seventh of days: I answer, that the prelates who urge this argument have least reason to use it, denying morality in the sabbath, and therein better agreeing with reformed churches abroad than the rest of our divines. As therefore the seventh day is not moral, but a convenient recourse of worship in fit season, whether seventh or other number; so neither is the tenth of our goods, but only a convenient subsistence morally due to ministers. The last and lowest sort of their arguments, that men purchased not their tithe with their land, and such like pettifoggery, I omit, as refuted sufficiently by others: I omit also their violent and irreligious exactions, related no less credibly; their seizing of pots and pans from the poor, who have as good right to tithes as they; from some, the very beds; their suing and imprisoning, worse than when the canon law was in force; worse than when those wicked sons of Eli were priests, whose manner was thus to seize their pretended priestly due by force; 1 Sam. ii. 12, &c. "Whereby men abhorred the offering of the Lord." And it may be feared, that many will as much abhor the gospel, if such violence as this be suffered in her ministers, and in that which they also pretend to be the offering of the Lord. For those sons of Belial within some limits made seizure of what they knew was their own by an undoubted law; but these, from whom there is no sanctuary, seize out of men's grounds, out of men's houses, their other goods of double, sometimes of treble value, for that which, did not covetousness and rapine blind them, they know to be not their own by the gospel which they preach. Of same more tolerable than these, thus severely God hath spoken: Isa. xlvi. 10, &c. "They are greedy dogs; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." With what anger then will he judge them who stand not looking, but under colour of a divine right, fetch by force that which is not their own, taking his name not in vain but in violence? Nor content, as Gehazi was, to make a cunning, but a constrained advantage of what their master bids them give freely, how can they but return smitten, worse than that sharking minister, with a spiritual leprosy? And yet they cry out sacrilege, that men will not be gulled and baffled the tenth of their estates, by giving credit to frivolous pretences of divine right. Where did God ever clearly declare to all nations, or in all lands, (and none but fools part with their estates without clearest evidence, on bare supposals and presumptions of them who are the gainers thereby,) that he re-

quired the tenth as due to him or his Son perpetually and in all places? Where did he demand it, that we might certainly know, as in all claims of temporal right is just and reasonable? or if demanded, where did he assign it, or by what evident conveyance to ministers? Unless they can demonstrate this by more than conjectures, their title can be no better to tithes than the title of Gahazi was to those things which by abusing his master's name he rooked from Naaman. Much less where did he command that tithes should be fetched by force, where left not under the gospel, whatever his right was, to the free-will offerings of men? Which is the greater sacrilege, to bely divine authority, to make the name of Christ accessory to violence, and robbing him of the very honour which he aimed at in bestowing freely the gospel, to commit simony and rapine, both secular and ecclesiastical; or on the other side, not to give up the tenth of civil right and propriety to the tricks and impostures of clergymen, contrived with all the art and argument that their bellies can invent or suggest; yet so ridiculous and presuming on the people's dulness and superstition, as to think they prove the divine right of their maintenance by Abraham paying tithes to Melchisedec, whenas Melchisedec in that passage rather gave maintenance to Abraham; in whom all, both priests and ministers as well as laymen, paid tithes, not received them. And because I affirmed above, beginning this first part of my discourse, that God hath given to ministers of the gospel that maintenance only which is justly given them, let us see a little what hath been thought of that other maintenance besides tithes, which of all protestants our English divines either only or most apparently both require and take. Those are fees for christenings, marriages, and burials: which, though whoso will may give freely, yet being not of right, but of free gift, if they be exacted or established, they become unjust to them who are otherwise maintained; and of such evil note, that even the council of Trent, 1, ii. p. 240, makes them liable to the laws against simony, who take or demand fees for the administering of any sacrament: "Che la sinodo volendo levare gli abusi introdotti," &c. And in the next page, with like severity, condemns the giving or taking for a benefice, and the celebrating of marriages, christenings, and burials, for fees exacted or demanded: nor counts it less simony to sell the ground or place of burial. And in a state-assembly at Orleans, 1561, it was decreed, "Che non si potesse essiger cosa alcuna, &c. p. 429, That nothing should be exacted for the administering of sacraments, burials, or any other spiritual function." Thus much that council, of all others the most popish, and this assembly of papists, though, by their own principles, in bondage

to the clergy, were induced, either by their own reason and shame, or by the light of reformation then shining in upon them, or rather by the known canons of many councils and synods long before, to condemn of simony spiritual fees demanded. For if the minister be maintained for his whole ministry, why should he be twice paid for any part thereof? Why should he, like a servant, seek vails over and above his wages? As for christenings, either they themselves call men to baptism, or men of themselves come: if ministers invite, how ill had it become John the Baptist to demand fees for his haptizing, or Christ for his christenings? Far less becomes it these now, with a greediness lower than that of tradesmen calling passengers to their shop, and yet paid beforehand, to ask again for doing that which those their founders did freely. If men of themselves come to be baptized, they are either brought by such as already pay the minister, or come to be one of his disciples and maintainers: of whom to ask a fee as it were for entrance, is a piece of paltry craft or caution, befitting none but beggarly artists. Burials and marriages are so little to be any part of their gain, that they who consider well may find them to be no part of their function. At burials their attendance they allege on the corpse; all the guests do as much unhired. But their prayers at the grave; superstitiously required; yet if required, their last performance to the deceased of their own flock. But the funeral sermon; at their choice, or if not, an occasion offered them to preach out of season, which is one part of their office. But something must be spoken in praise; if due, their duty; if undue, their corruption: a peculiar simony of our divines in England only. But the ground is broken, and especially their unrighteous pospossession, the chancel. To sell that, will not only raise up in judgment the council of Trent against them, but will lose them the best champion of tithes, their zealous antiquary, Sir Henry Spelman; who in a book written to that purpose, by many cited canons, and some even of times corruptest in the church, proves that fees exacted or demanded for sacraments, marriages, burials, and especially for interring, are wicked, accursed, simonical, and abominable: yet thus is the church, for all this noise of reformation, left still unreformed, by the censure of their own synods, their own favourers, a den of thieves and robbers. As for marriages, that ministers should meddle with them, as not sanctified or legitimate, without their celebration, I find no ground in Scripture either of precept or example. Likeliest it is (which our Selden has well observed, 1. 2, c. 28, Ux. Eb.) that in imitation of heathen priests, who were wont at nuptials to use many rites and ceremonies, and especially, judging it would be profitable, and the

increase of their authority, not to be spectators only in business of such concernment to the life of man, they insinuated that marriage was not holy without their benediction, and for the better colour, made it a sacrament; being of itself a civil ordinance, a household contract, a thing indifferent and free to the whole race of mankind, not as religious, but as men: best, indeed, undertaken to religious ends, and as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. vii. "in the Lord." Yet not therefore invalid or unholy without a minister and his pretending necessary hallowing, more than any other act, enterprise, or contract of civil life, which ought all to be done also in the Lord and to his glory: all which, no less than marriage, were by the cunning of priests heretofore, as material to their profit, transacted at the altar. Our divines deny it to be a sacrament; yet retained the celebration, till prudently a late parliament recovered the civil liberty of marriage from their encroachment, and transferred the ratifying and registering thereof from the canonical shop to the proper cognizance of civil magistrates. Seeing then that God hath given to ministers under the gospel that only which is justly given them, that is to say, a due and moderate livelihood, the hire of their labour, and that the heave-offering of tithes is abolished with the altar; yea, though not abolished, yet lawless, as they enjoy them; their Melchisedechian right also trivial and groundless, and both tithes and fees, if exacted or established, unjust and scandalous; we may hope, with them removed, to remove hirelings in some good measure, whom these tempting baits, by law especially to be recovered, allure into the church.

The next thing to be considered in the maintenance of ministers, is by whom it should be given. Wherein though the light of reason might sufficiently inform us, it will be best to consult the Scripture: Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things;" that is to say, in all manner of gratitude, to his ability. 1 Cor. ix. 11, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" To whom therefore hath not been sown, from him wherefore should be reaped? 1 Tim. v. 17, "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in word and doctrine." By these places we see, that recompense was given either by every one in particular who had been instructed, or by them all in common, brought into the church-treasury, and distributed to the ministers according to their several labours: and that was judged either by some extraordinary person, as Timothy, who by the apostle was then left evangelist at Ephesus, 2 Tim. iv. 5, or by some to whom the church deputed that care. This is so agreeable to reason,

and so clear, that any one may perceive what iniquity and violence hath prevailed since in the church, whereby it hath been so ordered, that they also shall be compelled to recompense the parochial minister, who neither chose him for their teacher, nor have received instruction from him, as being either insufficient or not resident, or inferiour to whom they follow; wherein to bar them their choice, is to violate Christian liberty. Our law books testify, that before the council of Lateran, in the year 1179, and the fifth of our Henry II., or rather before a decretal Epistle of pope Innocent the Third, about 1200, and the first of King John, "any man might have given his tithes to what spiritual person he would:" and as the Lord Coke notes on that place, Instit. part 2, that "this decretal bound not the subjects of this realm, but as it seemed just and reasonable." The pope took his reason rightly from the above-cited place, 1 Cor. ix. 11, but falsely supposed every one to be instructed by his parish priest. Whether this were then first so decreed, or rather long before, as may seem by the laws of Edgar and Canute, that tithes were to be paid, not to whom he would that paid them, but to the cathedral church or the parish priest, it imports not; since the reason which they themselves bring, built on false supposition, becomes alike infirm and absurd, that he should reap from me, who sows not to me; be the cause either his defect, or my free choice. But here it will be readily objected, What if they who are to be instructed be not able to maintain a minister, as in many vilages? I answer, that the Scripture shews in many places what ought to be done herein. First I offer it to the reason of any man, whether he think the knowledge of christian religion harder than any other art or science to attain. I suppose he will grant that it is far easier, both of itself, and in regard of God's assisting Spirit, not particularly promised us to the attainment of any other knowledge, but of this only: since it was preached as well to the shepherds of Bethlehem by angels, as to the eastern wise men by that star: and our Saviour declares himself anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, Luke iv. 18; then surely to their capacity. They who after him first taught it, were otherwise unlearned men: they who before Hus and Luther first reformed it, were for the meanness of their condition called the "poor men of Lions:" and in Flanders at this day, "le Gueus," which is to say, Beggars. Therefore are the Scriptures translated into every vulgar tongue, as being held in main matters of belief and salvation, plain and easy to the poorest: and such no less than their teachers have the spirit to guide them in all truth, John xiv. 26, and xvi. 13. Hence we may conclude, if men be not all their lifetime under a teacher to

learn logic, natural philosophy, ethics, or mathematics, which are more difficult, that certainly it is not necessary to the attainment of christian knowledge, that men should sit all their life long at the feet of a pulpited divine; while he, a lollard indeed over his elbow cushion, in almost the seventh part of forty or fifty years teaches them scarce half the principles of religion; and his sheep ofttimes sit the while to as little purpose of benefiting, as the sheep in their pews at Smithfield; and for the most part, by some simony or other, bought and sold like them: or if this comparison be too low, like those women, 1 Tim. iii. 7, "Ever learning and never attaining;" yet not so much through their own fault, as through the unskilful and immethodical teaching of their pastor, teaching here and there at random out of this or that text, as his ease or fancy, and ofttimes as his stealth, guides him. Seeing then that christian religion may be so easily attained, and by meanest capacities, it cannot be much difficult to find ways, both how the poor, yea all men, may be soon taught what is to be known of Christianity, and they who teach them, recompensed. First, if ministers of their own accord, who pretend that they are called and sent to preach the gospel, those especially who have no particular flock, would imitate our Saviour and his disciples, who went preaching through the villages, not only through the cities, Matt. ix. 35, Mark vi. 6, Luke xiii. 22, Acts viii. 25, and there preached to the poor as well as to the rich, looking for no recompense but in heaven: John iv. 35, 36, "Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest: and he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." This was their wages. But they will soon reply, we ourselves have not wherewithal; who shall bear the charges of our journey? To whom it may as soon be answered, that in likelihood they are not poorer than they who did thus; and if they have not the same faith which those disciples had, to trust in God and the promise of Christ for their maintenance, as they did, and yet intrude into the ministry without any livelihood of their own, they cast themselves into miserable hazard or temptation, and ofttimes into a more miserable necessity, either to starve, or to please their paymasters rather than God; and give men just cause to suspect, that they came neither called nor sent from above to preach the word, but from below, by the instinct of their own hunger, to feed upon the church. Yet grant it needful to allow them both the charges of their journey and the hire of their labour, it will belong next to the charity of richer congregations, where most commonly they abound with teachers, to send some of their number to the villages round, as the apostles from Jerusalem sent Peter and John to the city and

villages of Samaria, Acts viii. 14, 25; or as the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, chap. xi. 22, and other churches joining sent Luke to travel with Paul, 2 Cor. viii. 19; though whether they had their charges borne by the church or no, it be not recorded. If it be objected, that this itinerary preaching will not serve to plant the gospel in those places, unless they who are sent abide there some competent time; I answer, that if they stay there a year or two, which was the longest time usually staid by the apostles in one place, it may suffice to teach them, who will attend and learn all the points of religion necessary to salvation; then sorting them into several congregations of a moderate number, out of the ablest and zealousest among them to create elders, who, exercising and requiring from themselves what they have learned, (for no learning is retained without constant exercise and methodical repetition,) may teach and govern the rest: and so exhorted to continue faithful and stedfast, they may securely be committed to the providence of God and the guidance of his Holy Spirit, till God may offer some opportunity to visit them again, and to confirm them: which when they have done, they have done as much as the apostles were wont to do in propagating the gospel, Acts, xiv. 23, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." And in the same chapter, ver. 21, 22, "When they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." And chap. xv. 36, "Let us go again and visit our brethren." And ver. 41, "He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." To these I might add other helps, which we enjoy now, to make more easy the attainment of christian religion by the meanest: the entire Scripture translated into English with plenty of notes; and somewhere or other, I trust, may be found some wholesome body of divinity, as they call it, without school-terms and metaphysical notions, which have obscured rather than explained our religion, and made it seem difficult without cause. Thus taught once for all, and thus now and then visited and confirmed, in the most destitute and poorest places of the land, under the government of their own elders performing all ministerial offices among them, they may be trusted to meet and edify one another whether in church or chapel, or, to save them the trudging of many miles thither, nearer home, though in a house or barn. For notwithstanding the gaudy superstition of some devoted still ignorantly to temples, we may be well assured, that he who disdained not to

be laid in a manger, disdains not to be preached in a barn; and that by such meetings as these, being indeed most apostolical and primitive, they will in a short time advance more in christian knowledge and reformation of life, than by the many years' preaching of such an incumbent, I may say, such an Incubus ofttimes, as will be meanly hired to abide long in those places. They have this left, perhaps, to object further; that to send thus, and to maintain, though but for a year or two, ministers and teachers in several places, would prove chargeable to the churches, though in towns and cities round about. To whom again I answer, that it was not thought so by them who first thus propagated the gospel, though but few in number to us, and much less able to sustain the expense. Yet this expense would be much less than to hire incumbents, or rather incumbrances, for lifetime; and a great means (which is the subject of this discourse) to diminish hirelings. But be the expense less or more, if it be found burdensome to the churches, they have in this land an easy remedy in their recourse to the civil magistrate; who hath in his hands the disposal of no small revenues, left perhaps anciently to superstitious, but meant undoubtedly to good and best uses; and therefore, once made public, appliable by the present magistrate to such uses as the church, or solid reason from whomsoever, shall convince him to think best. And those uses may be, no doubt, much rather than as glebes and augmentations are now bestowed, to grant such requests as these of the churches; or to erect in greater number, all over the land, schools, and competent libraries to those schools, where languages and arts may be taught free together, without the needless, unprofitable, and inconvenient removing to another place. So all the land would be soon better civilized, and they who are taught freely at the public cost might have their education given them on this condition, that therewith content, they should not gad for preferment out of their own country, but continue there thankful for what they received freely, bestowing it as freely on their country, without soaring above the meanness wherein they were born. But how they shall live when they are thus bred and dismissed, will be still the sluggish objection. To which is answered, that those public foundations may be so instituted, as the youth therein may be at once brought up to a competence of learning and to an honest trade; and the hours of teaching so ordered, as their study may be no hindrance to their labour or other calling. This was the breeding of St. Paul, though born of no mean parents, a free citizen of the Roman empire: so little did his trade debase him, that it rather enabled him to use that magnanimity of preaching the gospel through Asia and Eu-

rope at his own charges. Thus those preachers among the poor Waldenses, the ancient stock of our reformation, without these helps which I speak of, bred up themselves in trades, and especially in physic and surgery, as well as in the study of Scripture, (which is the only true theology,) that they might be no burden to the church; and by the example of Christ, might cure both soul and body; through industry joining that to their ministry, which he joined to his by gift of the spirit. Thus relates Peter Gilles in his history of the Waldenses in Piemont. But our ministers think scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age, that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen; they would not so many of them, for want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching: and yet they clamour that tradesmen preach; and yet they preach, while they themselves are the worst tradesmen of all. As for church-endowments and possessions, I meet with none considerable before Constantine, but the houses and gardens where they met, and their places of burial; and I persuade me, that from the ancient Waldenses, whom deservedly I cite so often, held, "That to endow churches is an evil thing; and, that the church then fell off and turned whore, sitting on that beast in the Revelation, when under pope Sylvester she received those temporal donations." So the forecited tractate of their doctrine testifies. This also their own traditions of that heavenly voice witnessed, and some of the ancient fathers then living foresaw and deplored. And indeed, how could these endowments thrive better with the church, being unjustly taken by those emperors, without suffrage of the people, out of the tributes and public lands of each city, whereby the people became liable to be oppressed with other taxes. Being therefore given for the most part by kings and other public persons, and so likeliest out of the public, and if without the people's consent, unjustly, however to public ends of much concernment, to the good or evil of a commonwealth, and in that regard made public though given by private persons, or which is worse, given, as the clergy then persuaded men, for their souls' health, a pious gift; but as the truth was, ofttimes a bribe to God, or to Christ for absolution, as they were then taught, from murders, adulteries, and other heinous crimes; what shall be found heretofore given by kings or princes out of the public, may justly by the magistrate be recalled and reappropriated to the civil revenue: what by private or public persons out of their own, the price of blood or lust, or to some such purgatorious and superstitious uses, not only may, but ought to be taken off from Christ, as a foul dishonour laid

upon him, or not impiously given, nor in particular to any one, but in general to the church's good, may be converted to that use, which shall be judged tending more directly to that general end. Thus did the princes and cities of Germany in the first reformation; and defended their so doing by many reasons, which are set down at large in Sleidan, Lib. 6, Anno 1526, and Lib. 11, Anno 1537, and Lib. 13, Anno 1540. But that the magistrate either out of that church-revenue which remains yet in his hand, or establishing any other maintenance instead of tithe, should take into his own power the stipendiary maintenance of church-ministers, or compel it by law, can stand neither with the people's right, nor with christian liberty, but would suspend the church wholly upon the state, and turn ministers into state pensioners. And for the magistrate in person of a nursing father, to make the church his mere ward, as always in minority, the church, to whom he ought as a magistrate, Isa. xlix. 23, "to bow down with his face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of her feet;" her to subject to his political drifts or conceived opinions, by mastering her revenue; and so by his examinent committees to circumscribe her free election of ministers, is neither just nor pious; no honour done to the church, but a plain dishonour: and upon her whose only head is in heaven, yea upon him, who is only head, sets another in effect, and which is most monstrous, a human on a heavenly, a carnal on a spiritual, a political head on an ecclesiastical body; which at length, by such heterogeneal, such incestuous conjunction, transforms her oftimes into a beast of many heads and many horns. For if the church be of all societies the holiest on earth, and so to be reverenced by the magistrate; not to trust her with her own belief and integrity, and therefore not with the keeping, at least with the disposing, of what revenue shall be found justly and lawfully her own, is to count the church not a holy congregation, but a pack of giddy or dishonest persons, to be ruled by civil power in sacred affairs. But to proceed further in the truth yet more freely, seeing the christian church is not national, but consisting of many particular congregations, subject to many changes, as well through civil accidents, as through schisms and various opinions, not to be decided by any outward judge, being matters of conscience, whereby these pretended church-revenues, as they have been ever, so are like to continue endless matter of dissension both between the church and magistrate, and the churches among themselves, there will be found no better remedy to these evils, otherwise incurable, than by the incorruptest council of those Waldenses, or first reformers, to remove them as a pest, an apple of discord in the church, (for what else can be the effect of riches, and

the snare of money in religion?) and to convert them to those more profitable uses above expressed, or other such as shall be judged most necessary; considering that the church of Christ was founded in poverty rather than in revenues, stood purest and prospered best without them, received them unlawfully from them who both erroneously and unjustly, sometimes impiously, gave them, and so justly was ensnared and corrupted by them. And lest it be thought that, these revenues withdrawn and better employed, the magistrate ought instead to settle by statute some maintenance of ministers, let this be considered first, that it concerns every man's conscience to what religion he contributes; and that the civil magistrate is intrusted with civil rights only, not with conscience, which can have no deputy or representer of itself, but one of the same mind: next, that what each man gives to the minister, he gives either as to God or as to his teacher; if as to God, no civil power can justly consecrate to religious uses any part either of civil revenue, which is the people's, and must save them from other taxes, or of any man's propriety, but God by special command, as he did by Moses, or the owner himself by voluntary intention and the persuasion of his giving it to God. Forced consecrations out of another man's estate are no better than forced vows, hateful to God, "who loves a cheerful giver;" but much more hateful, wrung out of men's purses to maintain a disapproved ministry against their conscience; however unholy, infamous, and dishonourable to his ministers and the free gospel, maintained in such unworthy manner as by violence and extortion. If he give it as to his teacher, what justice or equity compels him to pay for learning that religion which leaves freely to his choice, whether he will learn it or no, whether of this teacher or another, and especially to pay for what he never learned, or approves not; whereby, besides the wound of his conscience, he becomes the less able to recompense his true teacher? Thus far hath been inquired by whom church-ministers ought to be maintained, and hath been proved most natural, most equal and agreeable with Scripture, to be by them who receive their teaching; and by whom, if they be unable. Which ways well observed can discourage none but hirelings, and will much lessen their number in the church.

It remains lastly to consider, it what manner God hath ordained that recompense be given to ministers of the gospel; and by all Scripture it will appear, that he hath given it them not by civil law and freehold, as they claim, but by the benevolence and free gratitude of such as receive them: Luke x. 7, 8, "Eating and drinking such things as they gave you. If they receive you, eat

such things as are set before you." Matt. x. 7, 8, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of God is at hand, &c. Freely ye have received, freely give." If God have ordained ministers to preach freely, whether they receive recompense or not, then certainly he hath forbid both them to compel it, and others to compel it for them. But freely given, he accounts it as given to himself: Phil. iv, 16, 17, 18, "Ye sent once and again to my necessity: not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit, that may abound to your account. Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God;" which cannot be from force or unwillingness. The same is said of alms, Heb. xiii. 16, "To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifice God is well pleased." Whence the primitive church thought it no shame to receive all their maintenance as the alms of their auditors. Which they who defend tithes, as if it made for their cause, whenas it utterly confutes them, omit not to set down at large; proving to our hands out of Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and others, that the clergy lived at first upon the mere benevolence of their hearers; who gave what they gave, not to the clergy, but to the church; out of which the clergy had their portions given them in baskets, and were thence called sportularii, basket-clerks: that their portion was a very mean allowance, only for a bare livelihood; according to those precepts of our Saviour, Matt. x. 7, &c. the rest was distributed to the poor. They cite also out of Prosper, the disciple of St. Austin, that such of the clergy as had means of their own, might not without sin partake of church maintenance; not receiving thereby food which they abound with, but feeding on the sins of other men: that the Holy Ghost saith of such clergymen, they eat the sins of my people; and that a council at Antioch, in the year 340, suffered not either priest or bishop to live on church-maintenance without necessity. Thus far tithers themselves have contributed to their own confutation, by confessing that the church lived primitively on alms. And I add, that about the year 359, Constantius the emperor having summoned a general council of bishops to Arminium in Italy, and provided for their subsistence there, the British and French bishops judging it not decent to live on the public, chose rather to be at their own charges. Three only out of Britain, constrained through want, yet refusing offered assistance from the rest, accepted the emperor's provison; judging it more convenient to subsist by public than by private sustenance. Whence we may conclude, that bishops then in this island had their livelihood only from benevolence; in which regard this relater Sulpitius Severus,

a good author of the same time, highly praises them. And the Waldenses, our first reformers, both from the Scripture and these primitive examples, maintained those among them who bore the office of ministers by alms only. Take their very words from the history written of them in French, Part 3, Lib. 2, Chap. 2, "La nourriture et ce de quoy nous sommes couverts, &c. Our food and clothing is sufficiently administered and given to us by way of gratuity and alms, by the good people whom we teach." If then by alms and benevolence, not by legal force, not by tenure of freehold or copyhold: for alms, though just cannot be compelled; and benevolence forced is malevolence rather, violent and inconsistent with the gospel; and declares him no true minister thereof, but a rapacious hireling rather, who by force receiving it, eats the bread of violence and exaction, no holy or just livelihood, no not civilly counted honest; much less beseeming such a spiritual ministry. But, say they, our maintenance is our due, tithes the right of Christ, unseparable from the priest, no where repealed; if then not otherwise to be had, by law to be recovered: for though Paul were pleased to forego his due, and not to use his power, 1 Cor. ix. 12, yet he had a power, ver. 4, and bound not others. I answer first, because I see them still so loth to unlearn their decimal arithmetic, and still grasp their tithes as inseparable from a priest, that ministers of the gospel are not priests; and therefore separated from tithes by their exclusion, being neither called priests in the New Testament, not of any order known in Scripture: not of Melchisedec, proper to Christ only; not of Aaron, as they themselves will confess; and the third priesthood only remaining, is common to all the faithful. But they are ministers of our high priest.—True, but not of his priesthood, as the Levites were to Aaron; for he performs that whole office himself incommunicably. Yet tithes remain, say they, still unreleased, the due of Christ; and to whom payable, but to his ministers? I say again, that no man can so understand them, unless Christ, in some place or other, so claim them. That example of Abraham argues nothing but his voluntary act; honour once only done, but on what consideration, whether to a priest or to a king, whether due the honour, arbitrary that kind of honour or not, will after all contending be left still in mere conjecture: which must not be permitted in the claim of such a needy and subtle spiritual corporation, pretending by divine right to the tenth of all other men's estates; nor can it be allowed by wise men or the verdict of common law. And the tenth part, though once declared holy, is declared now to be no holier than the other nine, by that command to Peter, Acts x. 15, 28, whereby all distinction

of holy and unholy is removed from all things. Tithes therefore, though claimed, and holy under the law, yet are now released and quitted both by that command to Peter, and by this to all ministers, above-cited Luke x. "eating and drinking such things as they give you:" made holy now by their free gift only. And therefore St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 4, asserts his power indeed; but of what? not of tithes, but "to eat and drink such things as are given" in reference to this command; which he calls not holy things, or things of the gospel, as if the gospel had any consecrated things in answer to things of the temple, ver. 13, but he calls them "your carnal things," ver. 11, without changing their property. And what power had he? Not the power of force, but of conscience only, whereby he might lawfully and without scruple live on the gospel; receiving what was given him, as the recompence of his labour. For if Christ the Master hath professed his kingdom to be not of this world, it suits not with that profession, either in him or his ministers, to claim temporal right from spiritual respects. He who refused to be the divider of an inheritance between two brethren, cannot approve his ministers, by pretended right from him, to be dividers of tenths and freeholds out of other men's possessions, making thereby the gospel but a cloak of carnal interest, and to the contradiction of their master, turning his heavenly kingdom into a kingdom of this world, a kingdom of force and rapine: to whom it will be one day thundered more terribly than to Gehazi, for thus dishonouring a far greater master and his gospel; "Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen?" The leprosy of Naaman, linked with that apostolic curse of perishing imprecated on Simon Magus, may be feared will "cleave to such and to their seed for ever." So that when all is done, and belly hath used in vain all her cunning shifts, I doubt not but all true ministers, considering the demonstration of what hath been here proved, will be wise, and think it much more tolerable to hear that no maintenance of ministers, whether tithes or any other, can be settled by statute, but must be given by them who receive instruction; and freely given, as God hath ordained. And indeed what can be a more honourable maintenance to them than such, whether alms or willing oblations, as these; which being accounted both alike as given to God, the only acceptable sacrifices now remaining, must needs represent him who receives them much in the care of God, and nearly related to him, when not by worldly force and constraint, but with religious awe and reverence, what is given to God, is given to him; and what to him, accounted as given to God. This would be well enough, say they; but how

many will so give? I answer, as many, doubtless, as shall be well taught, as many as God shall so move. Why are ye so distrustful, both of your own doctrine and of God's promises, fulfilled in the experience of those disciples first sent? Luke xxii. 35, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." How then came ours, or who sent them thus destitute, thus poor and empty both of purse and faith? Who style themselves embassadors of Jesus Christ, and seem to be his tithe-gatherers, though an office of their own setting up to his dishonour, his exactors, his publicans rather, not trusting that he will maintain them in their embassy, unless they bind him to his promise by a statute-law, that we shall maintain them. Lay down for shame that magnific title, while ye seek maintenance from the people: it is not the manner of embassadors to ask maintenance of them to whom they are sent. But he who is Lord of all things, hath so ordained: trust him, then; he doubtless will command the people to make good his promises of maintenance more honourably unasked, unraked for. This they know, this they preach, yet believe but: but think it as impossible, without a statute-law, to live of the gospel, as if by those words they were bid go eat their bibles, as Ezekial and John did their books; and such doctrines as these are as bitter to their bellies; but will serve so much the better to discover hirelings, who can have nothing, though but in appearance, just and solid to answer for themselves against what hath been here spoken, unless perhaps this one remaining pretense, which we shall quickly see to be either false or uningenuous.

They pretend that their education, either at school or university, hath been very chargeable, and therefore ought to be repaired in future by a plentiful maintenance: whenas it is well known, that the better half of them, (and ofttimes poor and pitiful boys, of no merit or promising hopes that might entitle them to the public provision, but their poverty and the unjust favour of friends,) have had the most of their breeding, both at school and university, by scholarships, exhibitions, and fellowships at the public cost, which might engage them the rather to give freely, as they have freely received. Or if they have missed of these helps at the latter place, they have after two or three years left the course of their studies there, if they ever well began them, and undertaken, though furnished with little else but ignorance, boldness, and ambition, if with no worse vices, a chaplainship in some gentleman's house, to the frequent embasing of his sons with illiterate and narrow principles. Or if they have lived there upon their own, who knows not that seven years charge of living there, to them

who fly not from the government of their parents to the licence of a university, but come seriously to study, is no more than may be well defrayed and reimbursed by one year's revenue of an ordinary good benefice? If they had then means of breeding from their parents, it is likely they have more now; and if they have, it needs must be mechanic and uningenuous in them, to bring a bill of charges for the learning of those liberal arts and sciences, which they have learned (if they have indeed learned them, as they seldom have) to their own benefit and accomplishment. But they will say, we had bataken us to some other trade or profession, had we not expected to find a better livelihood by the ministry. This is that which I looked for, to discover them openly neither true lovers of learning, and so very seldom guilty of it, nor true ministers of the gospel. So long ago out of date is that old true saying, 1 Tim. iii. 1, "If a man desire a bishopric, he desires a good work:" for now commonly he who desires to be a minister, looks not at the work, but at the wages; and by that lure or lowbell, may be tolled from parish to parish all the town over. But what can be plainer simony, than thus to be at charges beforehand, to no other end than to make their ministry doubly or trebly beneficial? To whom it might be said, as justly as to that Simon, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money; thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." Next, it is a fond errour, though too much believed among us, to think that the university makes a minister of the gospel; what it may conduce to other arts and sciences, I dispute not now: but that which makes fit a minister, the Scripture can best inform us to be only from above, whence also we are bid to seek them; Matt. ix. 38, "Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Acts xx. 28, "The flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Rom. x. 15, "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" By whom sent? By the university or the magistrate, or their belly? No surely, but sent from God only, and that God who is not their belly. And whether he be sent from God, or from Simon Magus, the inward sense of his calling and spiritual ability will sufficiently tell him; and that strong obligation felt within him, which was felt by the apostle, will often express from him the same words: 1 Cor. ix. 16, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Not a beggarly necessity, and the woe feared otherwise of perpetual want, but such a necessity as made him willing to preach the gospel gratis, and to embrace poverty, rather than as a woe to fear it. 1 Cor. xii. 28, "God hath set some in the church, first

apostles," &c. Ephes. iv. 11, &c. "He gave some apostles, &c. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith." Whereby we may know, that as he made them at the first, so he makes them still, and to the world's end. 2 Cor. iii. 6, "Who hath also made us fit or able ministers of the New Testament." 1 Tim. iv. 14, "The gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." These are all the means, which we read of, required in Scripture to the making of a minister. All this is granted, you will say; but yet that it is also requisite he should be trained in other learning: which can be no where better had than at universities. I answer, that what learning, either human or divine, can be necessary to a minister, may as easily and less chargeably be had in any private house. How deficient else, and to how little purpose, are all those piles of sermons, notes, and comments on all parts of the bible, bodies and marrows of divinity, besides all other sciences, in our English tongue; many of the same books which in Latin they read at the university? And the small necessity of going thither to learn divinity I prove first from the most part of themselves, who seldom continue there till they have well got through logic, their first rudiments; though, to say truth, logic also may much better be wanting in disputes of divinity, than in the subtile debates of lawyers, and statesmen, who yet seldom or never deal with syllogisms. And those theological disputations there held by professors and graduates are such as tend least of all to the edification or capacity of the people, but rather perplex and leaven pure doctrine with scholastical trash, than enable any minister to the better preaching of the gospel. Whence we may also compute, since they come to reckonings, the charges of his needful library; which, though some shame not to value at 600*l.* may be competently furnished for 60*l.* If any man for his own curiosity or delight be in books further expensive, that is not to be reckoned as necessary to his ministerial, either breeding or function. But papists and other adversaries cannot be refuted without fathers and councils, immense volumes, and of vast charges. I will shew them therefore a shorter and a better way of confutation: Tit. i. 9, "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince gainsayers:" who are confuted as soon as heard, bringing that which is either not in Scripture, or against it. To pursue them further through the obscure and entangled wood of antiquity, fathers and councils fighting one against another, is needless, endless, not requisite in a minister,

and refused by the first reformers of our religion. And yet we may be confident, if these things be thought needful, let the state but erect in public good store of libraries, and there will not want men in the church, who of their own inclinations will become able in this kind against papist or any other adversary. I have thus at large examined the usual pretenses of hirelings, coloured over most commonly with the cause of learning and universities; as if with divines learning stood and fell, wherein for the most part their pittance is so small; and to speak freely, it were much better there were not one divine in the universities, no school-divinity known, the idle sophistry of monks, the canker of religion; and that they who intended to be ministers, were trained up in the church only by the Scripture, and in the original languages thereof at school; without fetching the compass of other arts and sciences, more than what they can well learn at secondary leisure, and at home. Neither speak I this in contempt of learning, or the ministry, but hating the common cheats of both; hating that they, who have preached out bishops, prelates, and canonists, should, in what serves their own ends, retain their false opinions, their pharisaical leaven, their avarice, and closely their ambition, their pluralities, their nonresidences, their odious fees, and use their legal and popish arguments for tithes: that independents should take that name, as they may justly from the true freedom of christian doctrine and church-discipline subject to no superiour judge but God only, and seek to be dependents on the magistrates for their maintenance; which two things, independence and state-hire in religion, can never consist long or certainly together. For magistrates at one time or other, not like these at present our patrons of christian liberty, will pay none but such whom by their committees of examination they find conformable to their interests and opinions: and hirelings will soon frame themselves to that interest, and those opinions which they see best pleasing to their paymasters; and to seem right themselves, will force others as to the truth. But most of all they are to be reviled and shamed, who cry out with the distinct voice of notorious hirelings; that if ye settle not our maintenance by law, farewell the gospel; than which nothing can be uttered more false, more ignominious, and I may say, more blasphemous against our Saviour; who hath promised without this condition, both his Holy Spirit, and his own presence with his church to the world's end: nothing more false, (unless with their own mouths they condemn themselves for the unworthiest and most mercenary of all other ministers,) by the experience of three hundred years after Christ, and the churches at this day in France, Austria, Polonia,

and other places, witnessing the contrary under an adverse magistrate, not a favourable; nothing more ignominious, levelling, or rather undervaluing Christ beneath Mahomet. For if it must be thus, how can any Christian object it to a Turk, that his religion stands by force only; and not justly fear from him this reply, Yours both by force and money, in the judgment of your own preachers? This is that which makes athiests in the land, whom they so much complain of: not the want of maintenance, or preachers, as they allege, but the many hirelings and cheaters that have the gospel in their hands—hands that still crave, and are never satisfied. Likely ministers indeed to proclaim the faith, or to exhort our trust in God, when they themselves will not trust him to provide for them in the message whereon, they say, he sent them; but threaten, for want of temporal means, to desert it; calling that want of means, which is nothing else but the want of their own faith: and would force us to pay the hire of building our faith to their covetous incredulity. Doubtless, if God only be he who gives ministers to his church till the world's end; and through the whole gospel never sent us for ministers to the schools of philosophy, but rather bids us beware of such "vain deceit," Col. ii. 8, (which the primitive church, after two or three ages not remembering, brought herself quickly to confusion,) if all the faithful be now "a holy and a royal priesthood," 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, not excluded from the dispensation of things holiest, after free election of the church, and imposition of hands, there will not want ministers elected out of all sorts and orders of men, for the gospel makes no difference from the magistrate himself to the meanest artificer, if God evidently favour him with spiritual gifts, as he can easily, and oft hath done, while those bachelor divines and doctors of the tippet have been passed by. Heretofore in the first evangelic times, (and it were happy for christendom if it were so again,) ministers of the gospel were by nothing else distinguished from other christians, but by their spiritual knowledge and sanctity of life, for which the church elected them to be her teachers and overseers, though not thereby to separate them from whatever calling she then found them following besides; as the example of St. Paul declares, and the first times of Christianity. When once they affected to be called a clergy, and became, as it were, a peculiar tribe of Levites—a party, a distinct order in the commonwealth, bred up for divines in babbling schools, and fed at the public cost, good for nothing else but what was good for nothing, they soon grew idle: that idleness, with fulness of bread, begat pride and perpetual contention with their feeders the despised laity, through all ages ever since; to the perverting of

religion, and the disturbance of all christendom. And we may confidently conclude, it never will be otherwise while they are thus upheld undepending on the church, on which alone they anciently depended, and are by the magistrate publicly maintained a numerous faction of indigent persons, crept for the most part out of extreme want and bad nurture, claiming by divine right and freehold the tenth of our estates, to monopolize the ministry as their peculiar, which is free and open to all able Christians, elected by any church. Under this pretence exempt from all other employment, and enriching themselves on the public, they last of all prove common incendiaries, and exalt their horns against the magistrate himself that maintains them, as the priest of Rome did soon after against his benefactor the emperor, and the presbyters of late in Scotland. Of which hireling crew, together with all the mischiefs, dissensions, troubles, wars merely of their kindling, christendom might soon rid herself and be happy, if Christians would but know their own dignity, their liberty, their adoption, and let it not be wondered if I say, their spiritual priesthood, whereby they have all equally access to any ministerial function, whenever called by their own abilities, and the church, though they never came near commencement or university. But while protestants, to avoid the due labour of understanding their own religion, are content to lodge it in the breast, or rather in the books, of a clergyman, and to take it thence by scraps and mammocks, as he dispenses it in his Sunday's dole; they will be always learning and never knowing; always infants; always either his vassels, as lay papists are to their priests; or at odds with him, as reformed principles give them some light to be not wholly conformable; whence infinite disturbances in the state, as they do, must needs follow. Thus much I had to say; and, I suppose, what may be enough to them who are not avariciously bent otherwise, touching the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church; than which nothing can more conduce to truth, to peace and all happiness both in church and state. If I be not heard nor believed, the event will bear me witness to have spoken truth; and I, in the mean while, have borne my witness, not out of season, to the church and to my country.

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BY

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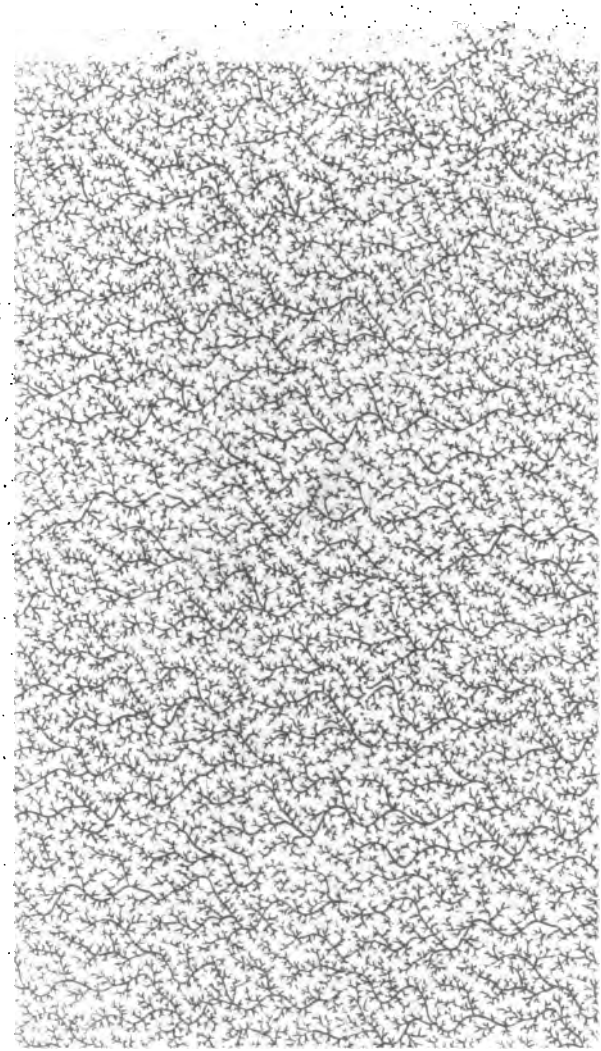
HEB. X. 37.

"*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*"

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